



By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet prepared an ark to the saving of his house. Heb. 11:1

They looked for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God. Heb. 11:10

This same Jesus shall come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. Acts 1:11

Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word. Acts 8:4

The city had no need of the sun neither of the moon for the glory of God did lighten it. Rev. 21:23

While the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept. Matt. 25:5

At midnight there was a cry made. Behold the bridegroom cometh. Matt. 25:6

Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. Mark 1:14

He that Overcometh Shall Inherit All Things. Rev. 21:7

The Megiddo Message

Devoted to the Cause of Christ

“Thy Kingdom Come”

The New Year Challenge

GOD'S DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

UNFINISHED THINKING

ABIB AFTERTHOUGHTS

THOUGHTS OF PRESENT AND FUTURE

MEDITATIONS ON THE WORD

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

AWAKING

Vol. 43, No. 8

April 21, 1956

The Megiddo Message

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Percy J. Thatcher, Editor

A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone, THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

- Strengthen your faith in the Bible
- Answer perplexing religious questions
- Give you courage for these uncertain times
- Help you live above the world's moral corruption
- Reveal to you how to develop a character acceptable to God
- Bring peace and stability to your life

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Letters

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Dear Friends:

Have just received my March copy of THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE, and so much has been made clear to me. I often wondered how Jesus could have been born in December. Now you have made it so clear that He wasn't.

Thank the dear Lord for the true teaching of His Word.

Chicago, Ill.

Mrs. L. B.

Missionary Scheme!

Dear Sir:

I am a subscriber to THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE and enjoy every page of it. I only wish I was able financially to have it sent to all my friends and neighbors. I read mine; then I select a name from my telephone directory and mail it to someone here in Cape Girardeau. That way I think it will get someone else interested.

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The books are wonderful. How much more reasonable are the arguments in the book, *What Must We Do to be Saved?* than those of so-called Christian ministers who tell you all you have to do is accept Christ and you are washed in His blood, all ready for heaven one minute before death, though you have done the worst things in life. I never could swallow that.

MEGIDDO is the long-awaited message I have sought for thirty years.

Fort Wayne, Ind.

C. T.

THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE Employs No Whitewash

Dear Editor:

Please keep the Christian MESSAGE coming to our home. We enjoy it very much, as it contains God's eternal truths. It calls sin sin, with no whitewashing. Wife and I are old in the service of our Lord and THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE is close to our hearts. May the good Lord bless you and your co-workers in every way.

Horseheads, N. Y.

Dr. J. L. J.

From One Boy (age 11) to Another (age 7)

Dear Emanuel:

It is a good thing that we know of the Truth while we are still small. When people first hear of it when they are grown and have walked with the world's sinfulness, they do not expect such a narrow way to walk in.

While we are able, we must learn and try to be good, so we can win that eternal prize which will last forever.

Bright, Ont.

W. B.

"THY KINGDOM COME

Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven"

MR. H. G. WELLS, in *The Outline of History*, states that the central theme of the preaching of Jesus was the radical and revolutionary doctrine of the Kingdom of Heaven. This gospel, he says with more truth than he realized, was and still is too much for humanity with its low tastes and small capacities.

Whatever the phrase may have meant to Mr. Wells, we who have gone to the Divine source for the definition agree with him that the gospel of the Kingdom is so all-embracing in its demands upon those who would be its citizens that few make application for citizenship, and still fewer see it through to the end.

Human "interpreters" of the Scriptures have wrested this glorious doctrine of the Kingdom of God to their own destruction and that of millions of their deluded followers, by attaching to it meanings which the Almighty never intended or approved, and which do not even agree among themselves. To one class it is an invisible, spiritual influence in the hearts of men. To others it is the Church, which some claim was established on the day of Pentecost. To millions upon millions it means a powerful ecclesiastical hierarchy which affects all the outward trappings of royalty. Yet none of these even faintly resembles the Kingdom glimpsed through the Word of the living God.

The imperfect condition of the human heart, the Church with its many failures, do not bear the stamp of divinity. If this be the Kingdom of God, after nearly two thousand years of operation, then we may fairly question the wisdom and power of its King.

No, this is not the Kingdom. This is not what God intended. An enemy—sin—hath done this. The Christian doctrine does not make the facts, but only the Christian doctrine can explain them and point to something better ahead—the age-old hope of humanity to be realized at last. For the coming of the Kingdom of God is the one and only hope of the world; and in these perilous times it is a very immediate necessity.

Age after age, men have had the heartache of seeing hopes blasted, and fair schemes for the regeneration of the world knocked to pieces about the ears of their projectors, yet they hope on. Every period, as every man, has its times of credulity, its firm conviction that it has found the one thing needful, and the shout of Eureka goes up.

Alas! time after time the old experience is repeated, and the shouts die down into gloomy silence. Yet men hope on. What strange testimony at once of the futility of all human efforts and of the indestructible hope that men have that the world will be brighter and better some day, that undying expectation is!

God forbid that we should disparage these expectations. Men have given them false shapes, but through the mist and darkness the eye of faith can discern the great Reality. Anything savoring of hope in these dark and hopeless days should be encouraged, nurtured and

directed toward truth and reality. We should never say, "It cannot be"; rather we are bound to say, "Yes, it is so, and we know how."

So much, then, the Prayer assumes: the certainty that the world is wrong; the certainty that the coming of the Kingdom—still future—is the only thing to set it right; the certainty that it can set it right; the certainty that it will. And, praise God, we have not been left to guess at the *modus operandi*. We know how. The gospel of the coming Kingdom, the bright hopes of its eternal glories, will transform the lives of a choice few in this age, preparing them for positions of rulership in the new order of the ages; but the world at large can be turned from its violently evil course only by Divinely directed physical force, by the elimination of every person and every thing which stands in the way of the coming of the Kingdom. Not until Christ returns to take His throne will this conquest begin; not until a thousand years later shall the Kingdom be fully come, after a millennium of peace and righteousness has filled the earth with immortal subjects, the living glory of God.

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," continues the same thought to its ultimate perfection. For our planet there can be nothing higher than this. God's will or plan on earth is only according to His "eternal purpose." He has a "family" in His finished handiwork above, and now is taking out a family from humanity. Can we not bow in loving adoration to such a Mighty Being? The goodness of God *leads* us. We are not slaves of a Sovereign; we are sons of our Father. And it is as sons that our wills, gladly yielding, surrender in total self-abnegation to the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of our Father.

The only true obedience is that of intelligent beings who know God and can turn themselves to contemplate His will. So the reference is obviously to higher orders of beings, those immortal citizens who inhabit the myriads of glorified worlds in the far-flung heavenly Kingdom of God. These are the "innumerable company of angels," beings who have once been mortal, tried and tempted as we are, and who have entered into their reward. These are our examples, for us to emulate. "They which shall . . . obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead," said Jesus, "neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the angels" (Luke 20:35, 36).

Since perfection of character is definitely our goal in our strivings toward that Kingdom, then these glorified spiritual beings must, as our examples, do it perfectly. There can be no interruption to it because of sin, no effort in it because of weakness, no resistance because of temptation, no flaw because of ignorance, no pause because of weariness, no pain because of rebellious will.

Note that it is not the knowledge, or the glory, or the blessedness of those immortals which is proposed for our

(Continued on page 8)

THE NEW YEAR CHALLENGE

The following address was delivered by the Rev. Percy J. Thatcher at the Megiddo Mission Church in connection with our Christmas and New Year celebration.

TODAY a new Bible year greets us; a new year challenges us; a new year of opportunity awaits us and invites us to live more holily before God and more nobly before our fellow men. Now that we have entered the new year, what new thing do we expect God to do for us? *What do we expect to do for Him?*

What great thing do we expect to see accomplished by truth working in us; or are we to be of that class who do not expect anything at all and stay in the same old rut in which we have for a long time been moving? Do we expect to continue traveling along in the same old drowsy routine, doing nothing wonderfully new, nothing startlingly great? Shall we trudge along the same old dusty road with the same old habits, notions and ways which have kept us back so long from coming out onto the hard pavement where determined footsteps can be heard traveling faster and faster to the lovely city of Zion?

As we look back over the days and months which have so swiftly sped away, we are often made ashamed to see the spiritual gardens of God springing up right where we have been, but in whose sowing we have had no part.

Many a harvest field we have passed and failed to help with the sickle and join in the song of the reapers. Great progress in the work of righteousness has been made which has meant much sacrifice which we might have shared, but sadly failed to grasp the opportunity. Many were the streams along the way into which we could have cast a crumb of the heavenly bread to float to Eternity's shore; but we passed on, letting our hands hang feebly down because our ears were often so dull we failed to hear the sweet Voice calling upon us to sow beside all waters.

Christian Living — A Challenge

Christian living is a life that challenges us at every step; it is a brave and daring life. We thank God today for the courage of our forefathers, whose faith and fortitude, when chained in prisons dark, are indelibly written on the pages of history for our admonition—yours and mine—upon whom the ends of the world are come. Let us not be softened by any ease nor warped by any conformity so as to seek for terms that will forfeit our high position as followers of the Lamb. We should live the daring life of a Christian, always being fearless to denounce every evil thing and possessing an unflinching devotion to every righteous thing.

We must live most nobly if we are to uphold the faith once delivered to the saints. May this be our earnest cry through the coming year: "Give me my cross. I will not shirk it!" Let our voice be the voice of the trumpet. The trumpet is bold; the trumpet is aggressive. It comes out to meet you; it challenges you. It says, "Come on." It is penetrating; it awakens the mind; it arouses us from sleep. When the trumpet is blowing, it is moving time. It moves to action and appeals to the will. Lift up your

voice like the trumpet; lift it up with strength; behold your God. Why should we be afraid to talk about God? Christ always lifted up His voice like a trumpet. He was not afraid to talk about God and His coming Kingdom and what we must do to prepare for it.

Great speed is needed to finish the work we have been called upon to do, for the evening shades are falling fast. Unless we are exceedingly careful, we shall slip into second gear, thus retarding our speed; and when we finally reach the city, the gates will be closed. Too late! No needle's eye left open to let us through! Let the coming year find us looking inward and upward, instead of outward and downward. We may do good, but too often it is only a trickle when we need a mighty flood. The Prophet calls upon us to "let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."

Growing the Soul — A Challenge

We make investments today which we trust will grow that we might have greater comforts in old age, but the greatest investment for assured accumulation is that made in *Growing the soul*, for the returns are not only the surest but the greatest. Growing the soul is the supreme end of life that we may form characters worthy of relationship as sons and daughters of the Eternal Father. "Consider the lilies, how they grow." "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Carrying a Bible on the street or to church, or joining in lip service with the worshipers to cause them to think we are growing a soul is an evidence the soul is not growing at all. Another test of the *growing of the soul* can be made by a close examination and true analysis of our character. When the roots of faith, hope and love have gone down deep enough into our lives, the temptations that once broke us as a reed can no longer move us. It is then we feel the security of the oak that weathered the blast of storms until it is proof against the hurricane.

A prominent man was once asked on what side of a great issue he stood. His reply to the question was, On what side does old man Do-little stand? When told, his answer came quickly, "Well, then, I am on the other side. I always find out what he thinks; then I think just the opposite, and I am always certain to be right." So just as certain as we find out the position Old Man Self takes, we must take the opposite side and we shall be sure to be right, for the Old Man's ways are always contrary to God's ways.

Getting in Touch with God — A Challenge

It is high time we were out of the doldrums, wondering whether or not it was really possible to get in touch with God. The difficulties lie with ourselves and are of our own making. When we are open and aboveboard, God is ready to be in touch with us. God meets every approach more than half way. When we really get in touch with Him, we shall be lifted above the defeats which have kept

us down in the dust. We need more of the constant recreation of the atmosphere, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

Are we really one who desires a high and noble position that will never be taken away? Do we realize that the saints are going to manage this world, that to reign on this earth is the true destiny of the Bride of Christ? We cannot be content with a faith which only occasionally comes in contact with God. If we want God at all, we want Him all the time. The heart of every true Christian longs for assurance of a steady guidance; even more, he desires that an all-wise purpose for him is back of that guidance. One who holds fast to God will never be satisfied till he can cry out, "My cup runneth over."

The day grows short. Eating our own flesh should indeed become repulsive and nauseating. If we are truly living on the manna sent down from heaven, we will lose our taste for the melons, leeks, garlic and onions from the valley of the Nile. Our life must be enlarged. It is the sacrificial life that enlarges, and the glory of the daily cross shines out in our every day living. If you would enlarge your life, then lose it. If you attempt to save it, you will lose it. God has proclaimed that we must be soldiers who will endure hardness. Hardships will make us; fleshpots will wreck us. Let us remember that the way out of the wilderness is not back to Egypt and its savory fleshpots. Our destination is ahead, not behind us.

Kadesh-barnea was the place of decision for Israel. There the great multitude burst forth with a mighty cry, "Let us return at once to Egypt." They became fearful of the giants that stood in their way. Should we today stand, as it were, before our Kadesh-barnea, may our voices ring out with the few, "Let us go up and possess the land, for we are well able."

A question, "How long is Eternity?" was given to a deaf and dumb pupil. A beautiful answer came back: "As long as the life of God." Oh, how slow we have been to give up our own evil ways and exchange the short fleeting present for a life that will continue as long as God's. If we lack faith, linger and hesitate, it is a sure sign we doubt that the Eternal is able to lengthen our lives like His and give us exceeding abundantly above all we are able to ask or think.

To the young the world's pleasures may look good. How gratifying it would be to feel, handle and taste! But be not like the mouse looking at the bait in the trap and think within yourself, "It looks like cheese. It smells like cheese. It must be cheese." Stop, before you reach to bite. Hidden behind the dainty morsel there, is a careful arrangement of hooks, wires and springs. May they arouse your fears and suspicions. Before too late, turn and seek the food God has furnished. It is richer and sweeter than that found in any trap man has set. Reach out your hand, take it, eat it. It is filled with life-giving protein.

Perfection of Character — A Challenge

It has been truly said that every man constructs his own world. The great masses build their world on carnal wishes and desires; others fashion their empires of finer material, on the higher and purer thoughts of mind and soul. He who desires to build only a world of clay, made up of low and sensual desires, shall in the end crumble into dust.

The truth of the Gospel looks every man squarely in

the face and says to him, "You have a chance to be a good man and you ought to be one." To mankind the idea of becoming perfect in character is but a mere will-o'-the-wisp. Let us ask, Was Jesus deceived when He gave that great commandment, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect"? Was the great Apostle deceived when he said that we must purify ourselves "even as he is pure"? Was God only deceiving Abraham, the father of the faithful, when He said, "Walk before me, and be thou perfect"? Was the record of Zacharias and Elisabeth falsified when it read, "They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless"? The greatest discovery of the age is not the universe within the atom, but truth within the soul; for this has enabled us to re-discover the old-time religion, the faith once delivered to the saints.

However troubled the waters beneath us, however dense the mist around us, however black the sky above us, true religion will find the cable that will hold us to a firm anchorage: "The Eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." The true Church of the Living God will never lower its standards, or water down its teachings, or broaden out its ways to compromise with the teachings of man. When we are closely related to God, our religion is real. We like to think of God as interested in our sorrows, joys, successes, and failures; but too often we bring Him our failures and want Him to turn them into successes. Men want to creep close to God in the hours of pain and sorrow, but in the hour of their own pleasure they do not even feel the need of Him. They reach only for His companionship when the storms of life break in blackness and fear upon them.

Spiritual Venture — A Challenge

God forbid that we should become so comfortably engrossed in the present order that we forget we are pilgrims and strangers and that here we have no continuing city. Through the coming year let us not lose the power of venture. Columbus ventured forth and found a new world. David ventured forth to slay the mighty Goliath; the three Hebrew children ventured to withstand the mandates of a heathen king and came off victorious. Paul ventured to proclaim the truth before Felix and Agrippa and caused Felix to tremble.

Jesus, the lowly Nazarene, whose birth we commemorate today, made a great venture when He called twelve men together and established a church which was far removed from the great Jewish religion and Roman civilization. It had nothing in common with the ideas and ethics of the crowd. As a result those faithful souls banded themselves together, held by inspiration and a devotion to their God, and made the greatest venture in history. To a world that believed in revenge, it preached love; to a society engrossed in pleasure, it preached duty and purity; to a civilization based on force, it preached goodwill. The things that looked like impossibilities to the early Church are the very things that assured its life growth, but the great thing was that it dared to make a venture.

Do not stand aside and say, "I see no place where I can make a venture." Listen! It is midnight. A mighty storm

is sweeping over a wild and restless sea. Flares are seen lighting up the sky. A deathly moan is heard from the whistle of the sinking ship. She is on the rocks—a wreck, going down. Will you help to push out the lifeboat? Will you take your place and help man the oars? Will you venture to pull with all your might and strength till the wreck is reached? Will you venture to help cast out the life line to save a drowning soul? It is a great venture but the opportunity to make it has never been taken away from God's people. There is no great venture in keeping just a flickering light burning on some distant shore and never launching out into the deep.

Many call upon the chiropractor to make major or minor adjustments for their physical ailments. As we stand at the dawning of a new year, would it not be well for us to have adjustments made for our spiritual ailments? It may be our head that needs adjustment, so we can be sure at all times to keep our equilibrium as we travel in the narrow way to life, or it may be the hands that feebly hang down, or the fingers that are weak to fight against sin. Perhaps it is the spine that needs adjustment so we can stand erect to face all evil. It may be the feet that need attention because they have become so weak and shaky that we are not able to lift them above the many obstacles that often hinder our onward progress.

Buy Your Ticket — A Challenge

Men and women believe that because they have committed no great sin God is going to give them a complimentary ticket into the haven of everlasting rest; but they are sadly mistaken, for every ticket must be bought with a price. What shall we have, Lord, if we give up all and follow Thee? The answer, A hundredfold in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting. Truth demands all that a man has; it imposes a cross for a crown. Men hesitate and say, "We know not where truth will lead us." What we ought to say is, "Will truth lead us to God?" If not, then God is not the God of truth. Many would yield themselves to truth if only they could limit it; but, if we are one who longs to live beyond this vale of tears, then truth must come to us in all its fullness.

An English woman was once asked if she did not feel proud to live in an empire whereon the sun never set. She quickly answered, "What is the use of living in an empire where the sun never sets, if one has to live in an alley on which the sun never rises?" Can we not thank God there is coming a Kingdom where the sun will never set nor the leaves ever fade; an empire where sickness, sorrow, pain and death shall all be gone? But unless we come out of the dark valleys of superstition and darkness, the Sun of Righteousness will never rise or shine upon us.

Jesus' answer to the complaint of Martha can be just as applicable to us; for in this rushing age we, too, can run to and fro in the world and also be cumbered with much serving. If not exceedingly careful there will be little time amid the ceaseless whirl of machinery and the relentless march of hours to sit down and listen to the words of our Master, with thoughtfulness and contemplation. In place of thoughtful meditation and communion with God, our spiritual offerings will be made up of all sorts of spiritual nostrums. There is just one way to bring about a cure. We must begin from within

and first cleanse the inside of the cup with the pure healing waters of truth. We can never build high and noble characters around fleshpot standards. Let us be ever pitiful and kind to others. Many are carrying heavy burdens. Be ready to help them bear their packs. The way to Zion is narrow and steep. Temptations will often cut like serpents' teeth. Eternal death sits near with cold and outstretched hands; but Christ who trod the way before us triumphed over death, and so can we.

Some year will be the last year; some day we shall meet with our last challenge. Some hour will be the last hour; then we shall have no more opportunity to use the talents God has given us. Whether one or two, take them out of their hiding place; use them for gain. You are the one who holds the key to the lock box. Let us be exceedingly careful about our example. If we take one step from the narrow way, it may cause another to take two.

In this battle of life let us not forget the power of prayer. The greatest of all teachers speaks to us this very night in sweet consoling words, "that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." If we tread the narrow way day by day, our aspirations will not be in vain; our hungering and thirsting for righteousness will not be mocked. To every earnest soul who is striving for the prize, God is near. We are moving, we shall win; we are marching, we shall arrive. Ever ahead are the footprints of Him who came to show us the way. Onward we press. If God be for us, who can be against us? When we have met the last challenge, entered the last struggle, fought the last fight, banished the last enemy, the prize will be ours, and God will swallow up death in victory.

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SOME PARENTS SAY

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We use our influence over flowers, vegetables, cattle—shall we ignore our children?

—Selected.

GOD'S DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

DAYLIGHT SAVING time as we know it is a plan of setting our clocks ahead one hour during the summer months in order to make better use of the daylight hours. In the North Temperate Zone clocks are usually set ahead about May first, and are set back on standard time about October first.

The idea of daylight saving originated with Benjamin Franklin. But its modern development is due principally to the efforts of an English builder, William Willetts, who lived from 1856 to 1915. In 1907 he published a pamphlet, "Waste of Daylight," in which he advocated setting the clocks ahead one hour during the summer months.

Since World War I daylight saving has been used in many parts of the United States and in numerous European countries. During World War II clocks in the United States were set ahead one hour for the entire year, and the practice was followed in England where still another hour was added for the summer period.

God also employs daylight saving in His plan on the earth. He also advocates, and more, He demands, that we save daylight. Time is given us to use, not to squander, nor to waste in backward thinking and idleness of hands. We are commanded to work, "work out [our] own salvation with fear and trembling." And to work we need daylight. "Now is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation." Lifetime is working time, and to save this working time we must redeem it. The command is: "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil." It will be too late to work when the shadow of death overtakes us and our feet stumble on the dark mountains, and working time has fled forever.

Time must be utilized, for soon it will be gone. Jesus showed He had the right idea when He said: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; for the night cometh when no man can work" (John 9:4). And the earlier in the day we begin working the more hours there are before nightfall. In the book of Ecclesiastes the Preacher admonishes: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest," hence a prime reason why we should operate our lives on a daylight saving basis. The Psalmist also was time-conscious. He said: "I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments." And wisdom's voice speaks prudently: "I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me."

Literally speaking, to save daylight one must be up with the morning and use the time. The Scriptures record a number of cases where this plan was employed to advantage. Abraham rose early in the morning when obeying God's command to go to the land of Moriah and offer his son Isaac for a burnt offering. Lot was commanded to flee from doomed Sodom, and his exit that morning was so early that he had reached the escape-city of Zoar by the time the sun had risen.

King Jehoshaphat and Judah arose early in the morning and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa to sing praises to the "Beauty of Holiness" before a battle in

which they did not even have to fight; victory was theirs as a favor from the God of heaven.

On the morning of Jesus' resurrection the loyal women among Jesus' immediate followers, and His disciples, went early to the sepulcher, and were rewarded by finding the stone rolled away and the tomb empty.

"Up! with the morning, O pilgrim of Zion,
On with thy sandals, and haste thee away;
Press to the mark of thy calling in Jesus,
Heed not, though pleasures invite thee to stay.

"Up! for thy Master commands thee to labor,
On! for the moments are flying apace;
Run! and with patience thy journey pursuing,
Thine be the crown at the end of the race."

The virtuous woman of Proverbs 31, the Church, is time-conscious to the point that she arises while it is yet night to give meat to her household. And again Paul's advice to the true Church is: "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

And today, early rising, in a figurative sense, has its place if we are truly bound for the Kingdom.

No alert Christian would deny that our clocks need setting ahead; it already is later than we think. It is imperative that we seek God as early in life as we can. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." Our time-concept needs setting ahead to offset our natural tendency to procrastinate.

Daylight saving, to be practical, must be state-wide, otherwise annoying confusion prevails; so each clock in God's community upon earth must be set ahead. God demands uniformity. Every active citizen under the Lord's jurisdiction must keep himself conscious of the urgency of the hour, each must be aware that "in a little, a very little now, the Coming One will arrive without delay," and spend each precious moment getting ready to meet Him.

Not all of the population care for daylight saving time. It benefits the workers principally. It gives them an extra hour of daylight at the end of the day which they can spend accomplishing home duties, or at pleasurable pastimes. Likewise God's daylight saving gives extra time at the close of the day of salvation to the workers, those making use of the time, especially benefiting us for whom the "shadows of the evening are stretched out."

We shall not solve our problems by postponing them.

The man who wastes today lamenting yesterday will waste tomorrow lamenting today.

It is not always the conspicuous who deserve the most praise. Any man can work when every stroke of his hand brings down the fruit rattling from the tree to the ground; but to labor in season and out of season, under every discouragement, by the power of truth—that requires heroism which is transcendent.

UNFINISHED THINKING

IN any attempt to put our finger on the chief cause of human mistakes and miseries, it would be well first to consider how much there is in the world of unfinished thinking. Yes, just that—unfinished, slipshod thinking! We need to be re-educated in our thinking habits. It is a natural tendency to leave off thinking at the place where effort begins. We stop with wishful thinking instead of reasoning all matters through to their ultimate conclusion.

Finished thinking involves thinking the entire length of the line, from end to end; thinking from outside in and from inside out. Finished thinking includes hindsight, foresight, and insight. Hindsight profits by the experiences of the past. Foresight looks not only to the immediate results, and desirable alternates, but goes forward with the full sweep of constructive, progressive thinking. It feeds day by day upon those thoughts that make for spiritual growth, and reaches out persistently after the better things that only God can offer. It keeps aspiring, whether life is easy or hard. These questions, "What reason have I for accepting this or rejecting that? Shall I be glad or sorry if I adopt this course of action? What am I really aiming at and working toward?" asked seriously and carefully, are the beginning of finished thinking.

Should we find ourselves becoming impatient, or even irritable, if we would think the affair through we would realize that impatience and irritability never do us any good; they do not improve the character or give peace of mind. At such times we need also to think of the unwholesome effect our irritability may have upon those with whom we are associated.

Again, we may automatically stop our thinking with the envious or bitter feeling, when we should carry through to the pernicious effects of this evil, which the Wise Man warns us is "the rottenness of the bones." Who of us would deliberately bring such a condition upon himself in the natural! With finished thinking, we can have godliness and contentment, which the Apostle Paul says is "great gain."

Pride comes in; and with incomplete thinking we dwell on our hurt feelings instead of pressing on to the higher, nobler outlook. Too often our thinking stops with self-pity, when we ought to be thinking how we can wrest a victory out of defeat! "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he," said the Wise Man.

Every resentment we encourage, every ill mood we welcome, every smug conceit, every unjust estimate, is a product of our unfinished thinking. The struggle with this obstinate human nature of ours is hard; but if we persevere, and pursue with a fixed purpose the vision of something better, it will have its transforming power.

Finished thinking has that insight which gives heed to the true values of life. It has breadth of outlook, clearness of perception, and it is absolutely honest toward oneself and toward others. It holds before the mind a picture of the individual we want to be, and seizes upon every opportunity to transform ourselves into that particular image.

Our natural thoughts arise from a jumble of instincts, impulses, sentiments, and ambitions; and only finished

thinking is capable of bringing these miscellaneous tendencies into perfect harmony inwardly. We easily get into ruts of thought and conduct, and this must be watched. Our thinking habits are a matter of training, just as is every other ability we possess. Thoughts and motives that are good must be picked out just as consciously and deliberately as any other choice articles we treasure.

We are not responsible for what is put before our minds in the course of a day, but it is a part of every man's business to determine what shall stay in his mind. The drifter allows himself to give lodgment to any thought that may chance to enter his mind; whereas the man that is set for the building up of self, deliberately chooses what he will let himself think and what kind of feelings he will harbor. Oh yes, it takes work, and plenty of it! Our minds will respond very grudgingly at first; but if we do not become impatient, but keep on trying, gradually we shall acquire the knack of thinking all things through to their proper conclusion. Persevere, and we shall be amazed!

It is not often that the experiences of our lives explain themselves the moment we enter into them. And when we must pass through bitter days, it is only finished thinking that gives faith that the after time will be the sweeter for the trial.

Unfinished thinking hampers our spiritual development. It causes our minds to dwell upon our trials; we look upon them as unprofitable intruders, and not the vital elements of our re-making that they actually are.

The secret thoughts that we live with can weaken or strengthen our moral fiber. They are what determine the outcome when we meet face to face with an unfavorable circumstance. And they ultimately determine the character that we present to the Lord.

The reward of radiant, abundant, immortal life which faithful men and women shall receive at that Day will be the direct result of *finished thinking*!

"THY KINGDOM COME"

(Continued from page 3)

example, but their service—their *doing* of the Divine will. This at once corrects those who think of the immortal life as one of idleness. There will always be work—thank God!

Then again, there is here the grand idea that the whole creation shall in that Day be bound into a unity by obedience to one will. We and they now form one whole, because we now serve the one Lord. And there comes a time when there shall be one Lord and His name one; when the curtain shall be lifted and another world adopted into the family of glorified spheres.

What glorious harmonies will sound then, when all co-operate with God and with one another, with eternity before us, and one purpose, and one will, and one love fills the whole creation! Earth will no longer be separated from Heaven, but united with it, and from one extremity of creation to another shall be no creature which does not obey and rejoice.

Abib Afterthoughts

THE recurrent religious festival has always filled a deep social and psychologic need. People seem to be so constituted that a special day or season of refreshing, of pilgrimage, of reunion, of re-consecration, is required from time to time to keep them spiritually alive. Thus it was that when the worship of Jehovah became an organized religion under Moses, the Law wisely provided frequent feasts and gatherings, the keeping of which was a solemn duty. Their faithful observance was a powerful force in holding God's people together, and their influence persists to this day.

To the Megiddo congregation, far or near, no season is more holy or joyful than the time of our Saviour's birth, the new moon of Abib. (For evidence, see MEGIDDO MESSAGE, March 31, 1956, page 7.) On no other occasion is so much loving effort lavished. To honor our coming King in a fitting manner and to present His truth to the world convincingly is a duty—no, a privilege—worthy of the best that we can give; and the best always comes back to us in the form of a spiritual uplift and renewed strength for the battle of life. In retrospect the season just closed stands out as one of the "best ever."

On true Christmas Eve, April 11, a carefully prepared drama, *The Quest of the Ages*, was presented in the church by the Maranatha Society. The Quest, whether in the First Century, or the Third, or the Seventh, or the Twentieth, is for life—eternal, abundant. The theme is introduced by a colorful tableau and song, after which the drama follows the career and fortunes of the Confessors of the Name, who endured—or failed—under savage persecution at the hands of Nero and Decius and the Bishops of Alexandria. There is stark tragedy—in the catacombs and at the gates of the arena, where to choose Christ rather than Diana was to invite a cruel death. But there are also brilliant overtones of triumph, as the faithful witnesses rose on wings of faith above their circumstances and their persecutors, and so gained for themselves an everlasting name and the sure promise of the life which they sought. Death in its most horrible form is only a brief interlude, too brief to be counted, when, their quest ended, they gather on the shining shore of the Ocean of Eternity.

An inspiring morning praise service opened the next day's activities. At noon, 254 persons dined in the church dining room, and at 2:30 the children, local and visiting, took over for a three-hour program which was one of the day's most delightful features. To describe it adequately is impossible; we only wish with all our hearts that every reader of the MESSAGE could have witnessed it. At the close of the afternoon, great quantities of useful gifts were distributed to the children.

The evening service was in the hands of the Progressives, as the men's organization is called. After a concert by the band, our pastor, the Rev. Percy J. Thatcher, spoke feelingly on "The New Year Challenge," exhorting all his hearers to keep the page spotless in the oncoming year, for eternal life is only for the overcomers. A short but touching drama, *Christ's Freeman*, followed the defection, the conversion, and the homecoming and forgiveness of Onesimus, the runaway slave in whose behalf the Apostle Paul wrote the Letter to Philemon.

The church was filled to capacity on both evenings. The homes of local brethren were opened to a record number of visitors from many points in the United States and Canada, for many of whom it was their first pilgrimage to Megiddo. We trust they departed with an assurance that it was good to have been here.

Thoughts of Present and Future

There may be some who say—
Oh! in what way
Can such a life as mine is, glorify
Our heavenly Father,
Or be a reasonable sacrifice?
What can I gather
To fit me for His Kingdom, whiles that I
Must work, and toil, and struggle day by day,
And scarcely wrest
My daily reading from my needful rest;
Troubled like Martha, though my dearest choice
Would be to listen to the Master's voice?

Oh, when I stand
On Sunday on the hilltop, as it were,
And get bright glimpses of the far off land,
While the fresh breeze
Of goodly exhortation lifts the screen
Of mist that gathers on the hills between,
And with the Word supreme
I feed on things divine,
And earthly things seem blotted out of sight,
In that great light
That shows the truth a rock—all else a bubble.

Ah me! no trouble
Would seem too hard to bear at times like these.
Yet though my heart has thus within me burned
And leaped to reach perfection, I have learned,
All of this earnest purpose will not stay,
When to the actual duties of the way,
Down into week-day valleys I must go
And meet the little things that "vex me so";
Get "put upon" and "worried,"
Perplexed, beguiled, surrounded every way
By things that seem not to have much connection
With God-ward aspiration
And Apostolic exhortation.
Here is a heart for light and glory crying,
Here are dull, dusty duties round me lying;
What shall I do, to reconcile the two?

Just stop and think:
These are the pens and ink
With which you have to write that daily book
Wherein the Lord will look
In the great day of our examination.
Christian, remember,
These are the thorns with which you have to fashion
A crown of sweet compassion,
That, knowing how they prick, you may refrain
From giving others pain.
To bear the cross with Christ and with him die
Is still to crucify
Each natural thought and act,
And daily dying, daily live again.

Sharp irritations,
Being overlaid with patience,
Will make fair pearls for your most meet adorning;
And in the morning
The stinging and the smart will fade away.
Then, be a grain of sand, or cross, or thorn,
In patience to be borne,
Still let us, by all means, to attain
The resurrection joy that fadeth never.
And when thy crown is fashioned and the stain
Of thy last, lingering fault is purged away,
Perhaps the Lord will bid thee go thy way,
Rest from thy labors till the appointed day
When thou shalt rise and stand
At his right hand,
And having won the strife
Put forth thine hand unto the tree of life,
And eat and live for ever.

—Selected.

Meditations

On the Word

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me" (John 15: 1-4).

The mark of truly great writing or speaking is its simplicity. The "long way around," words not understood, long words where short ones would answer, are not only a waste of energy but poor taste as well. It is no wonder that ever since its translation, the Bible has been a model of prose composition, for, while the most profound Book ever written, it is marked throughout by the greatness of simplicity. The central figure of its human characters, Jesus of Nazareth, was the deepest thinker the world has ever known, yet His teachings are so very simple and direct that an unwilling world still recoils from the stark proposition contained in them, while doing the Teacher lip-service. He could be profound, as witness the fifth and sixth chapters of the Gospel according to John; yet even there the mystery is eliminated by the plain and simple qualifying sentences (as chapter 6: 63).

Much of His teaching is cast in that favorite Oriental form, the parable, yet the language is simple and the figures employed are of familiar, everyday things. His ancestors began as a pastoral people, with a later change to an economy largely agricultural. There was a strong commercial bent, which persists to the present, but it was largely ignored by the Teacher, who spoke often of flocks and grain and vines and trees, but rarely of trade and profits and losses.

In John 10, the shepherd and his sheep are the theme of the sermon. His listeners could understand that, just as they could the 15th chapter, where the symbol is the vine; for the grape has been cultivated in Mediterranean countries from time immemorial. It is a particularly fitting symbol; for the vine, above most cultivated things, requires constant and relentless pruning, or "purging," as King James' translators rendered it, because of its vigorous growth. A vine left to itself will grow—yes, but into what? A very few years of neglect renders it a tangled mass of vegetation, choked with dead and worthless branches, productive of little or no fruit. Worse still, it tends to revert to its original wild stock. One may see around the ruins of a forgotten farmstead, neglected vines whose few grapes are assuming the unmistakable form and flavor of the wild fox-grape, the parent of all our native American cultivated varieties. Possessing neither beauty nor utility, it cumberes the earth until Nature removes it by one or another of her methods.

On the other hand, a vine properly tended, pruned and fed will live, bear fruit and furnish scions for countless other vines for many years. Fifty years is not unusual,

and the original Scuppernong grape vine, planted in early Colonial days, the ancestor of thousands of its kind, was a few years ago reported to be still fruitful and vigorous after some two centuries of usefulness.

Pruning is not always easy for the novice. It requires courage, or faith, or both, to cut away quantities of good-looking growth, but it is for a purpose, for the benefit of what remains. The strength of the whole plant is thereby channeled into the production of fruit on the surviving branches.

The analogy is simple, as applied to man's spiritual life. The human mind is the most active thing in creation, and the most constructive, for good or ill; but, like the vine, its very activity will prove its undoing if not properly restrained and directed. History has proved it, again and again; and in our day we see the most highly educated nations of earth sunk to the lowest depths of barbarism because uncontrolled by Divine law. If we aspire to be followers of the Christ who pleased not Himself, the pruning process is absolutely essential, the sword of the Spirit cutting off that which is useless, that the useful may be strengthened. For we cannot have everything, or do everything, or be everything. If we try to spread ourselves too thin, we waste our strength and, like the unpruned vine, bear no fruit worthy of the Husbandman's use.

When we see a mammoth specimen of fruit or a choice exhibition flower, we admire without thinking of the great amount of sacrificial pruning it represents. So a great and good life is made so by its self-denials and self-discipline. Only as we purge or cut away the rank parasitic growth of the flesh can the fruits of the Spirit develop. So when God disciplines us, when our heart's desire is denied us by the higher demands of Truth, let us remember that the Husbandman makes no mistakes, that nothing worth while is being removed, but it is that we may bear more fruit.

The careful simplicity and clarity of the Gospel is made evident in the third verse of our meditation text, which states in the plainest of words the essential truths of the already simple figure. It is the Word which cleanses or purges us (Heb. 4: 12). Not merely hearing or reading the Word, of course, but obedience to it is the only thing which profits (John 13: 17; Rev. 1: 3). There is no mention of literal blood, or a propitiatory death, or atonement, but merely obedience to the Word. Could anything be simpler?

Resuming the figure of speech, the 4th verse cautions us that no branch ("ye are the branches"—v. 5) can live or bear fruit unless attached to the vine, which is Christ, the Truth. This is elementary, yet some men have actually attempted to work out their salvation without being in union with Christ and His true body, or Church (Col. 1: 18). While certain commendable things may be achieved without knowledge or acceptance of Divine Law, it is impossible to attain to perfection of character unless in perfect union with the Source of all righteousness.

George Washington in his Farewell Address warned the infant Republic that the idea that morality could be maintained without religion should be "entertained with great caution." What the Father of his Country timidly suggested, the Word of God, confirmed by human experience, proclaims boldly and unequivocally: true morality is impossible without the influence of true religion.

Your Questions Answered

BIBLICAL PERSONAL CURRENT



Do you have a question? Personal replies will be sent to Biblical questions to any correspondent, and counsel will be offered on problems pertaining to the spiritual life. **THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE** will publish only the most helpful discussions for the benefit of other readers. No names shall be mentioned.

In Matthew 11: 11 we read: "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." My conclusion would be that John was one of the greatest on earth, yet he that was least among the immortals shall be greater than John was at that time.

Your conclusion is correct. Jesus was contrasting the transient present with the eternal future. John the Baptist was a towering character, and highly respected by his generation; but he was still mortal, and even then lying in prison, under the dark shadow of the executioner's sword. The humblest citizen of the New Jerusalem will face no such prospect, once immortality is bestowed, but shall enjoy far greater comfort and happiness than the human imagination in its highest flights can conceive (I Cor. 2: 9).

Who were Jesus' brothers and sisters, as mentioned in Matthew 13: 55, 56; Mark 6: 3; and Galatians 1: 19?

These texts mean what they say. Jesus acknowledges their kinship in His answer (Mark 6: 4). The Roman Church invented the dogma of the perpetual virginity of Mary, for which there is no Scriptural sanction. These "brothers and sisters," were, of course, half-brothers and half-sisters, since they were the children of Joseph and Mary, and not of miraculous conception as was Jesus.

The identification of "James the Lord's brother" (Gal. 1: 19) according to a footnote in Wilson's *Emphatic Diaglott* points to James the son of Alphaeus or Cleophas (variations of the same name). This would make him a cousin of our Lord, since Mary Cleophas was the sister of Mary the mother of Jesus (John 19: 25). The Greek *adelphos*, here translated "brother," may also signify cousin.

In Matthew 2: 19 we are told that Herod the king died when Jesus was taken from Bethlehem to Egypt as a child. . . . and in Luke 23: 7-10 we find that, 32 years later, Jesus was brought before Herod for questioning. Please harmonize.

Herod was the name of a family—a family which never should have been. Of Idumean (Edomite) descent, but political converts to Judaism, they ruled portions of Palestine as Roman puppets and quislings for several generations, and left names to be execrated for all time.

HEROD THE GREAT, the first and worst of the line, was in power when Jesus was born. HEROD ANTIPAS, a son by one of his ten wives, was almost as bad, and was the Herod who beheaded John the Baptist and before whom Jesus was brought. HEROD AGRIPPA I, a grandson of Herod the Great, was a persecutor of the infant Church, executing the Apostle James and imprisoning Peter (Acts 12: 1, 2). It was before his son, HEROD AGRIPPA II, that Paul delivered his memorable defense, as recorded in Acts 26.

What is the "mark of the beast" (Revelation 13: 16-18)?

The "beast" which figures so prominently in the visions of the book of Revelation is identified in ch. 17 as the seven-hilled city of Rome—first pagan, then papal. This is the power which Daniel (chs. 7 and 8) saw in vision as making war with the saints and overcoming them, thus

bringing about the Great Apostasy, a dark period of 1,260 years in which the saving truth lay dead.

The "mark" of this beast is simply any taint, in doctrine or practice, of Romish error, as opposed to the "Father's name," or word of truth, which was seen written in the foreheads or minds of the faithful (Rev. 14: 1). There was a time, as history testifies, when Rome was supreme and no man was allowed to "buy or sell," spiritually speaking, without this mark (Rev. 13: 17). Thank God, those days are gone forever, and the truth of the Scriptures again shines out!

Before learning the way of Truth I was a habitual player of chess and checkers. I still play occasionally with a friend; no betting, just pleasant entertainment. Is this right for a professing Christian?

Paul answers this question decidedly: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5: 17). The truth in us must be stronger than our former tastes and desires. It must create in us new tastes and ambitions. The past must be forgotten and left behind. Such games may appear harmless, but much valuable time is wasted which could be used in acquiring a better knowledge of God's Word, and using that knowledge to help enlighten others who are searching for the Truth. Others have helped us to see the light—we must help still others. It is our duty. And remember, we are warned to redeem the time, for the days are evil; and time is short. Would you be found playing a game of chess when Jesus comes?

How can we parents who have teen-aged children keep them from polluting their minds by the moral corruption that is in the world?

The answer lies principally in rearing the children from their tender age "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The truths about God, reverence, honesty, purity, must early be taught the child. Children need not only instruction, they need guidance and a good parental example. As they advance in years they should be warned about the numerous pitfalls. "Bad company is the ruin of good character," says Paul (I Cor. 15: 33, Moffatt). Children should be kept away from companions whose conduct is definitely improper. A bad companion can pollute a youth's mind rapidly; so also can a bad book, a bad picture, a bad song, or a bad story. The world is full of it and it cannot be escaped entirely. It will be met sooner or later.

But if youth is to escape being influenced and led downward after exposure, it will be because of good moral upbringing in early years. Later, when better fortified, if the early training has been right and they have the desire to live right, they can pass through the "devil's" citadel itself unaffected, as did Joseph, or Moses, or Daniel.

Upon what condition will God hear our prayer and forgive?

This question is answered by the Wise Man. "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination. . . . He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov. 28: 9, 13). If we confess and forsake our sins, God will hear and forgive. See I Chron 7: 14. We read: "We know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshiper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth" (John 9: 31). We should also remember the words of our Lord: "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive your trespasses" (Matt. 6: 14).

AWAKING

I have done at length with dreaming;
Henceforth, O thou soul of mine,
Thou must take up sword and buckler,
Waging warfare most divine.

Life is struggle, combat, victory!
Wherefore have I slumbered on
With my forces all unmarshaled,
With my weapons all undrawn?

O how many a glorious record
Had the angels of me kept
Had I done instead of doubted,
Had I warred instead of wept!

I have wakened to my duty,
To acknowledge strong and deep,
That I recked not of aforetime,
In my long, inglorious sleep.

'Tis so sweet, and yet so awful
So bewildering, yet brave,
To be king in every conflict
Where before I crouched a slave!

'Tis so glorious to be conscious
Of a growing power within
Stronger than the rallying forces
Of a charged and marshaled sin.

O those olden days of dalliance,
When I wantoned with my fate;
When I trifled with the knowledge
That had well-nigh come too late.

Yet, my soul, look not behind thee;
Thou hast work to do at last;
Let the brave toil of the present
Overarch the crumbling past.

Build thy great acts high and higher;
Build them on the conquered sod
Where thy weakness first fell bleeding,
And thy first prayer rose to God.

—Sel.